

*Family Who Paid \$5,000 for Non-Existent Legal Services*

*Joins Congressman to Highlight Serious*

*Problem Affecting Immigrant Communities*

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Media Contact: Douglas Rivlin (202) 225-8203

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**(Chicago)** – Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez (D-IL) held a press conference in front of the Pilsen offices of a legal services operation that allegedly ripped off at one least one immigrant family seeking legal advice. The family, headed by Luciano Arevalo, who also attended the press conference, came to Gutierrez' office after spending more than \$5,000 for services that, according to the family, were not rendered. The Arevalo family paid the firm at the storefront marked "Servicios Legales" to file paperwork with the Department of Homeland Security - which oversees immigration -- related to legal immigration status for family members. According to Rep. Gutierrez, the papers were never filed and the legal status of at least one family member was

put in jeopardy.

"Unfortunately for Mr. Arevalo," Rep. Gutierrez said at the press conference, "he has paid Servicios Legales more than \$5,000 for direct legal help on behalf of his daughter, two sons and his wife. In return, he received nothing. And only because of the assistance of my office is his family not facing very serious trouble with their applications."

Rep. Gutierrez said he had contacted the Cook County State's Attorney about the matter and was calling on the U.S. Attorney, the Cook County State's Attorney, and the Illinois Attorney General "to express my concerns and to ask how we can all work together to crack down on anyone who exploits immigrants."

Rep. Gutierrez said what had happened to the Arevalo family was a symptom of the larger problem this country is having resolving the issue of immigration reform.

"The Arevalos are the reality of immigration today. Good people. Hard-working people. Decent people who have a dream. To live in America legally," Rep. Gutierrez said. "We will solve our immigration crisis when we allow good people to come out of the shadows and contribute to our society. We will solve our immigration problem when we have a legal immigration system people can use efficiently so fewer feel they have to go around it illegally. Until then, immigrants will be victims and vulnerable to predators. They will be at the mercy of storefronts like Servicios Legales. They will be at the mercy of employers who refuse to pay them or keep them safe. They will be at the mercy of politicians who use them to get a few extra votes."

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